

Industrial Worker

★ ORGANIZATION ★ EDUCATION ★ EMANCIPATION ★

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After firing Philadelphia workers for protesting its union-busting, ACORN management attacks West Coast workers

Seattle ACORN workers strike for recognition, fair play

Field organizers struck the Washington state ACORN office Feb. 26, after manager Doug Bloch refused to recognize the IWW as their union or to address several long-standing grievances. The strike is still underway at press time, with Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now management refusing even to discuss the strikers' offer to return to work pending a NLRB union representation election.

On the morning of February 26th, the field organizers of the Washington ACORN office, along with 30 supporters from the ACORN membership and the IWW in Seattle, handed manager Doug Bloch authorization cards signed by five out of six workers and demanded recognition of the IWW as their union and immediate resolution of a list of grievances. Bloch refused to recognize the union even after being told that the workers were prepared to strike. In response, the office was shut down and pickets began at both entrances to the building.

The demands included union recognition, paychecks issued on time and in full, a policy on sexual harassment and discrimination, a 40-hour work week, health care, safety policies, lunch breaks, and that no one gets fired for union activity.

Workers had been working for as long as 40 days without paychecks, and when they finally were paid the checks were up to \$500 short. One worker who had been employed for over a month, had never been paid and at press time has yet to receive her wages. Another worker had been sexually assaulted on a house call, and even the scant health care coverage offered after three months of employment had not been activated for a third worker after being there for six months. Working conditions in general mirrored the problems that sparked the IWW union drive in Philadelphia, and violations of labor laws seem to be part of ACORN national employee policy.

After about an hour of picketing, the employer approached the workers and asked if he could address their concerns. Picketing ceased while workers gave management another opportunity to recognize the union. Instead, Bloch parroted the line that had been given to the Philly workers: that the bargaining unit must be all of the workers coast to coast, and that it would "be illegal" to recognize the union. Seeing that Bloch was merely stalling, and after he began to interrogate one worker, the workers continued the strike.

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Periodicals Postage
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mailing offices

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AFL-CIO fears is on verge of extinction

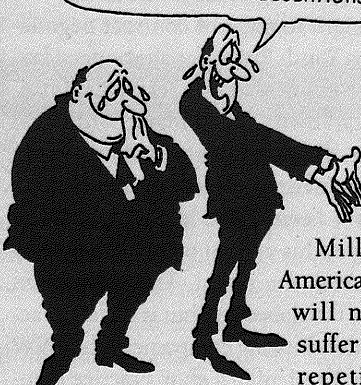
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U.S. congress kills workplace ergonomics safety regs

OH LOOK, J.P. IT'S A HAPPY LITTLE WORKER FREED FROM THE SHACKLES OF BURDENSOME HEALTH & SAFETY REGULATIONS.



Millions of American workers will needlessly suffer crippling repetitive-motion

injuries as a consequence of Congress' decision to overturn ergonomics standards developed by the Occupational Safety & Health Administration after a decade of studies.

The federal Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that 1.8 million work-related musculoskeletal disorders, such as tendinitis, carpal-tunnel syndrome and back strain, were reported last year, based on samples of workplace-injury logs. But the real numbers are probably far higher. Scores of recent studies have found widespread underreporting by workers, many low-wage immigrants with a limited understanding of what causes their wrists and shoulders to ache and burn — and a clear understanding that reporting their injuries will endanger their jobs.

The vote was a major victory for business groups, which argued that compliance costs could reach \$100 billion (most analysts believe the cost would be closer to \$5 billion, a fraction of what is spent each year to treat injured workers).

It was a crushing defeat for the labor movement. "Dishonest" and "disgraceful" are not strong enough words to describe the Senate vote against injured workers," said AFL-CIO President John Sweeney.

Six Democrats joined all 50 Republican senators in voting to overturn the workplace rule, providing the margin of defeat. Ironically, the six received more than \$1.2 million in labor contributions last year, according to reports compiled by the Center for

Responsive Politics.

Labor Secretary Elaine L. Chao, whose confirmation was supported by the AFL-CIO, also played a key role in persuading Congress to kill the regulations by promising to work with business to develop new rules that would protect workers on the cheap.

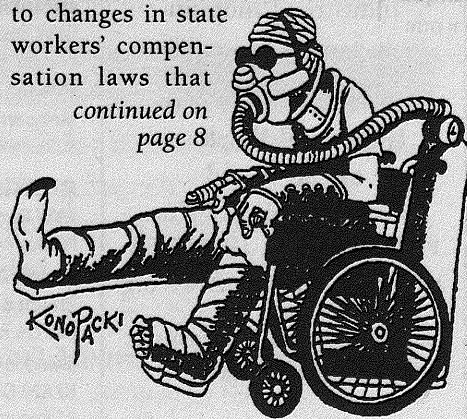
The ergonomics regulation would have covered 102 million workers at more than 6 million work sites, requiring employers to provide workers with information about possible injuries and risk factors, review complaints, redesign workplaces if they were found to cause problems, ensure access to medical care, and provide compensation for disabilities.

Repetitive stress injuries are often treated as a white-collar illness. However, the workers most at risk are not computer operators but blue-collar packers and assemblers, folks at the bottom of the economic scale for whom a decade of "economic prosperity" has meant long hours and high production speeds.

Some have learned to work through the pain. Others simply walk away from debilitating jobs, often crippled for life.

While still high, reported injuries have dropped slightly in recent years — a trend that manufacturers and other business groups cite as proof that the now-repealed rules were unnecessary. Facing mounting workers compensation premiums, many employers did change workstations to cut injuries. But there are many other factors at play in the downward trend, ranging from new bonus programs for injury-free production lines to changes in state workers' compensation laws that

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South Korean autoworkers battle bosses, riot police for their jobs as economy crumbles

Class war in Korea

BY MICHAEL HARGIS

Daily clashes between hundreds of laid-off autoworkers, their families and supporters, and thousands of riot police shook South Korea from February 16 through March 7 in a battle over layoffs at Daewoo Motors, Korea's third largest automaker.

This struggle had been brewing since the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis resulted in the collapse of Daewoo Motor and many other firms. Daewoo has been operating under court receivership since it filed for bankruptcy in November 2000 with estimated debts of US\$10 billion. In return for emergency loans, Daewoo Motor promised to eliminate 34 percent of its workforce, or 5,500 of 16,000 workers.

In late December management announced plans to lay off 5,498 workers to improve the terms of the company's possible sale to General Motors. In response workers

(members of the Korean Metal Workers Federation, affiliated with the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions) voted to strike.

The union also filed suit against the company's former head, Kim Woo-choong, who left South Korea in the fall 1999 after his Daewoo group disintegrated under huge mountains of debt. The union accuses Kim of embezzling or diverting billions of dollars in company funds and even went so far as to dispatch a flying squad of unionists to Paris in search of the elusive capitalist.

In mid-January workers staged a series of short "guerrilla strikes" to protest the projected layoffs. In response Daewoo closed its plants in Pupyong, west of Seoul, from Feb. 12 to March 6, ostensibly to cut inventory.

On Feb. 16 the company sent pink slips to 1,751 workers. About 600 laid-off workers and family members then barricaded

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Readers' Soapbox:

International solidarity meeting in Madrid

Al badil al chououii al taharruri (Lebanon), AL (France), CNT (France), FAU (Uruguay), FA (France), FAG (Brazil), OSL (Argentina), OSL (Switzerland), SAC (Sweden), SKT (Siberia), and Unicobas (Italy) have indicated they will participate (either in person or virtually) in the international meeting organized by the Spanish CGT on March 31st. Several other organizations have indicated their interest in principle.

This meeting is designed to bring together as many anarchosyndical, revolutionary syndicalist and anarchist organizations and individuals to debate and sign a joint declaration.

The guiding spirit behind the declaration is that the basic principles of direct action, self-management, mutual aid, federalism and internationalism, as put into practice by syndical organizations, are behind many of the current social struggles, even when known by other names. At the same time it is a recognition that the workers' movement has changed, and that workers' organizations have to adapt themselves to that change and organize on other lines apart from pure workplace organization.

The declaration is on www.cgt.es/jornlib2001/dec1.htm (English) and www.cgt.es/jornlib2001/docbase.htm (Spanish).

On April 1st, the organizations which sign the above declaration will discuss how to participate in a series of biannual international solidarity movements with specific solidarity actions to foment local actions. More information can be found on www.cgt.es/jornlib2001/dec2.htm

— Chris Robinson
CGT International Committee

Wobs protest Janus union-busting

BY MARK HARRIS

Some 40 labor, civil rights and community activists joined IWW members at the headquarters of Janus Youth Programs in NE Portland Feb. 15 to demand that management reinstate three illegally fired workers.

Janus is a 'non-profit' corporation under contract to the city of Portland, Oregon, to provide social services to young people. The IWW represents the social workers employed at Harry's Mother, a subdivision of Janus, and has been organizing other Janus units.

After eight months of contract negotiations, Janus Youth Programs announced layoffs of three union activists, Tera Couchman, Michele Markowitz and Jordana Sardo, and elimination of the Student Alliance of Garden Entrepreneurs program. Each of these women have been active in the union, and their firing at this crucial point is a clear attempt to break the union. This tactic is in violation of U.S. labor law, but is widely practiced by union-busting companies. The IWW quickly filed an Unfair Labor Practice complaint with the National Labor Relations Board and began organizing community support for their struggle.

Since Janus operates under cover of IRS 'non-profit' status, it is required by law to provide certain financial records to members of the public who request them during regular business hours. Feb. 15 was the legal deadline for Janus to provide these reports. More than a dozen citizens requested the documents, but Janus refused to provide them, ultimately taking addresses and promising to mail the documents in short order. Workers believe the documents will prove that Janus has more than sufficient funds to meet the union's demands, rescind cutbacks and lay-offs, and pay a living wage. They feel

that this fact lies behind the mysterious inability to produce the required documents.

Jordana Sardo, one of the laid-off workers and a member of the IWW bargaining committee, told supporters that the strong public campaign waged by the IWW has already won a two-week postponement of layoffs, and a verbal offer (not yet made in formal contract negotiations) to hire back two of the three women and to fund the Student Association of Garden Entrepreneurs program until October. However unacceptable condition: of additional work under more difficult circumstances had been attached to the offer.

Janus runs 20 programs in the city of Portland. Harry's Mother is the only program with union representation. Committed social workers are routinely paid dismal wages for difficult work. The IWW is demanding a pay increase to \$10.60 an hour, and intends to spread organizing efforts through the entire non-profit sector.

In a follow-up action, IWW Industrial Union 670 members picketed outside the Stoel Rives law offices in downtown Portland Feb. 28 to demand the immediate reinstatement of Jordana Sardo, and an end to Janus' union-busting.

Despite a reputation as a liberal law firm, Stoel Rives is playing a union-busting role



Wobblies picketed the Janus Youth Programs, Inc. offices in Portland, Oregon, Feb. 15 to demand reinstatement of laid-off union activists and an end to Janus union-busting.

as the legal advisor to Janus management at the bargaining table. The law firm also is a member of Janus' board of directors. Over 60 unionists, civil rights activists, feminists and youth attended the action. Among the organizations providing solidarity with IU 670 were members of several Industrial Unions of the IWW, two Teamsters locals, Carpenters, Municipal Employees, the Urban Workers Union and Jobs with Justice. Students from high schools and local universities, as well as other young people attended the demonstration.

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UK posties, shop hands organizing

The IWW's General Distribution Workers Industrial Union 660 has won a long-standing grievance at the Co-operative Wholesale Society store in New Milton, UK, getting a fellow worker a substantial back pay settlement and an upgrade to the correct pay rate. The British Wobs recently launched Shopfloor, a newsletter for shop and supermarket workers. The first issue criticizes the dominant union in the field, USDAW, "because although they are very large, we believe they are too pro-employer and too institutionalised into company procedures to be of use in improving our lives. ... We believe in union organisation which is completely independent from employers, with a minimum of bureaucracy and workers making decisions for themselves."

Another article asks, How's Life At Tesco?

"Since the late 1980s, trade unions have retreated into a very defensive position.

"The main aim now does not seem to be promoting collective bargaining and organisation, but partnership agreements with employers and providing workers with legal and financial advice.

"The aim of things like check-off agreements where union subscriptions are deducted directly from wages and now partnership agreements with employers is to keep the money rolling in to feed the union bureaucracies' coffers.

"One social partnership agreement which USDAW held up as the way forward was the one they signed with Tesco. Now the news from the grapevine is that not all the workforce think this is the greatest thing since Tesco sliced bread was introduced... Not all union members get to vote on the wages agreement, and many shop stewards were unhappy with the last agreement and were pressured into accepting the deal by full-time officials. The union is finding it difficult to deliver on basic issues such as protective clothing."

The article concludes by asking Tesco workers for their views of the agreement.

Posties demand 35-hour week

The IWW Postal Workers' Union has issued a leaflet asking the pressing question, Isn't It Time We Had A 35-Hour Week?

The "Shorter Working Week" as proposed by The Way Forward agreement provides for full-time postal workers who are currently on a 41 1/2 hour week to fall into line with what many other workers have enjoyed since the 1960s, namely a 40-hour week.

On the face of it, the Post Office has changed little for decades despite all attempts at changing the image. The GPO, Royal Mail, Royal Mail Letters back to Royal Mail again and so on. Hundreds of thousands of pounds spent on a new logo and name while the same out-of-date conditions prevail.

Much is owed to the days when uniformed services based their employee relations on military practices. Hence holidays are still referred to as "leave," and the person who gives out overtime is the overtime "captain." Disciplinary procedures still resemble court martials at which you may be accompanied by a "friend," and disciplinary action by management is called an "award."

Do not be misled. Royal Mail are bang up to date and know full well what they are about in treating workers as though they are beasts of burden.

When the last reduction in working hours took place over 12 years ago, the working week was reduced from 43 hours to the present 41 1/2. Between the proposal going through and the implementation of it, the one and a half hours was banked, and when everyone went onto the new hours these hours were given back as time off.

Not so this time. The CWU have not

sought to get an agreement from Royal Mail that the hour and a half will be banked. Since May thousands of staff have been working an hour and a half extra for no overtime. That's almost two weeks a year worked for Royal Mail with not a penny in payment.

To add insult to injury, Royal Mail with agreement from CWU insist that over 60 percent of the reduction in working hours is funded by staff. In short, work harder in less time and you can have a 40-hour week.

In the last twenty years, Royal Mail has brought in machines to face and stamp letters and packets, and to code sort mail into areas. Before long these machines will be sorting to walk order. Until now, job losses have been dealt with by "natural wastage," but how much longer can this go on for?

Under the present capitalist system, new technology has invariably meant job losses. It has never entered the heads of management that hours could be reduced with no loss of pay for workers. Such a concept is alien to the greed-driven rush for more profits and fatter wage packets for bosses.

Royal Mail is no better than any other employer. You really are just a number. They would rather give you the sack than bring in a realistic modern proposal like a 35-hour week.

Given the level of investment Royal Mail have ploughed back in of the money you have made for them, there is no reason why anyone should still be working a 40-hour week.

The attitude of the bosses, Royal Mail and CWU, in bringing in a 40-hour week quite honestly insults workers. It's as though they are doing us a favour!

We should be fighting for a 35-hour week now for all full-time staff. What is required is a union that will take up the fight for the equalisation of hours downward for both full-time and part-time staff, because it will involve a fight. They have never given

us anything without one.

We will be taking on the combined might of Royal Mail and the CWU in order that our jobs will be secure and the postal service will be a better place to work in the years ahead. What we need is a union which is prepared to make these things a reality.

The Industrial Workers of the World is such a union. No union bosses drinking from the same cup as the employers, no union bosses on fantastic salaries, just workers like yourselves working alongside you.

This rotten society cannot be reformed. This is where politicians are wrong. It must be re-built anew with the needs of the working class, the only class that matters, firmly in mind. That way technology can be put to use to make life pleasant and give each person more time to enjoy it.

Join with other workers around the world who see the enemy as the ruthless bosses and their management puppets who exploit our labour.

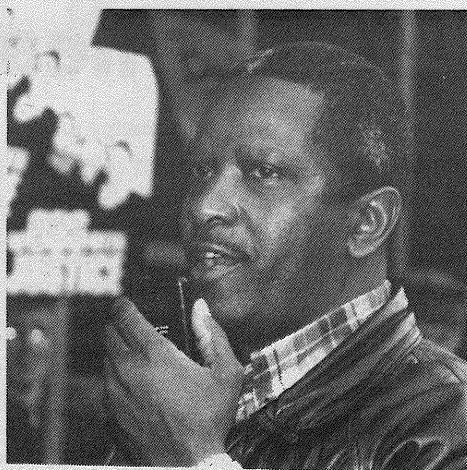
Join the Industrial Workers of the World, the Fighting Union.

IWW Postal Workers' Union,
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Around Our Union

General Executive Board Chair Joshua Freeze presented a "banjo extravaganza" in Philadelphia March 11, featuring labor songs and stories, and a smattering of bluegrass. Two weeks earlier, West Philadelphia's A-Space was packed for a showing of "The Wobblies."

In San Francisco, the East Bay GMB tabled at the annual Anarchist Bookfair, distributing IWW literature to hundreds of participants. The Branch maintains an active tabling program throughout the Bay area, reaching out to prospective members, spreading working-class literature, and providing opportunities for members to catch up with local delegates to pay their dues.



Fired worker Burton Strode addresses the rally

Portland solidarity action for Diamond Parking workers

IWW members joined unionists from Jobs For Justice, Workers Organizing Committee, Carpenters, Teamsters, Steelworkers, ILWU and concerned citizens, Feb. 14 to show their support for the union organizing campaign of the workers of Diamond Parking. The company is one of the largest parking companies in the West, operating over 900 facilities in the US and British Columbia. Diamond workers, when they are free to express themselves without fear of reprisals, strongly support the union, with 80% submitting union authorization cards. However, the company has refused to recognize the union, instead harassing and firing union supporters.

Some 40 supporters picketed for over an hour at a busy downtown parking facility during the evening rush period, engaging as many customers as possible.

Burton Strode, a two year veteran of Diamond Parking, explained how he became involved in the struggle for the union, and how, once he was recognized as an organizer, the company engaged in a campaign of harassment against him. His hours were cut back to 5 hours per week, at \$8 an hour, and false charges were brought against him. He was fired shortly thereafter.

Preamble to the IWW Constitution

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the earth.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system."

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for the everyday struggle with capitalist, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

Join the IWW Today

The IWW is a union for all workers, a union dedicated to organizing on the job, in our industries and in our communities both to win better conditions today and to build a world without bosses, a world in which production and distribution are organized by workers ourselves to meet the needs of the entire population, not merely a handful of exploiters.

We are the Industrial Workers of the World because we organize industrially – that is to say, we organize all workers on the job into one union, rather than dividing workers by trade, so that we can pool our strength to fight the bosses together.

Since the IWW was founded in 1905, we have recognized the need to build a truly international union movement in order to confront the global power of the bosses and in order to strengthen workers' ability to stand in solidarity with our fellow workers no matter what part of the globe they happen to live on.

We are a union open to all workers, whether or not the IWW happens to have representation rights in your workplace. We organize the worker, not the job, recognizing that unionism is not about government certification or employer recognition but about workers coming together to address our common concerns. Sometimes this means striking or signing a contract. Sometimes it means refusing to work with an unsafe machine or following the bosses' orders so literally that nothing gets done. Sometimes it means agitating around particular issues or grievances in a specific workplace, or across an industry.

Because the IWW is a democratic, member-run union, decisions about what issues to address and what tactics to pursue are made by the workers directly involved.

TO JOIN: Mail this form with a check or money order for initiation and your first month's dues to: IWW, Post Office Box 13476, Philadelphia, PA 19101.

Initiation is the same as one month's dues. Our dues are calculated according to your income. If your monthly income is under \$1,000, dues are \$6 a month. If your monthly income is between \$1,000 - \$2,000, dues are \$12 a month. If your monthly income is over \$2,000 a month, dues are \$18 a month.

- ☐ I affirm that I am a worker, and that I am not an employer
- ☐ I agree to abide by the IWW constitution
- ☐ I will study its principles and make myself acquainted with its purposes.



Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Occupation: _____
Phone: _____ E-mail: _____
Amount Enclosed: _____
Membership includes a subscription to the Industrial Worker.

AFL-CIO headed for extinction?

In the wake of new data showing union membership has plummeted to just 13.5 percent of the U.S. workforce, the American Federation of Labor has come up with a bold new program. The AFL-CIO will hold rallies in 24 cities across

If this is the best the AFL tops can come up with, it's little wonder that AFL-CIO President John Sweeney warned his fellow bureaucrats that the Federation is in serious danger of extinction.

the country under the slogan: "Respect Work, Strengthen Family."

The new slogan was introduced in a two-page glossy spread in the AFL magazine, *America@Work*, which explains: "Respect Work, Strengthen Family encompasses organizing, bargaining, the global fairness and Voice@Work campaigns and supports the union movement's goals to strengthen retirement security and health care, expand prescription drug benefits and improve education. ... The Respect

Work, Strengthen Family initiative will enable the union movement to build on the momentum of the elections and inoculate against the attacks we'll get by putting forward a positive agenda..."

If this is the best the AFL tops can come up with, it's little wonder that AFL-CIO President John Sweeney is reported to have



Funeral for a dinosaur? Taps is played while pie-cards bow their heads in sorrow.

warned his fellow bureaucrats that the Federation is in serious danger of extinction. "If we don't begin to turn this [union membership] around quickly and almost immediately," the *New York Times* quotes Sweeney as telling AFL union leaders at a closed-door meeting, "the drift in the other direction is going to make it virtually impossible to continue to exist as a viable institution..."

While the AFL-CIO reports having organized 350,000 workers last year, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that overall union membership actually fell by 200,000 workers as a result of lay-offs, factory closings, retirements and decertification votes. Some of the AFL's "organizing" tallies also include mergers with independent unions.

While the AFL-CIO admits that its organizing efforts have fallen far short, the Federation is much more pleased with its political wing. "The American labor movement in terms of political operations and political juice has showed its stuff," said AFL organizing director Mark Splain. "The issue is, is there a way for the labor movement to duplicate that type of success in organizing?"

Sweeney, who continues to call for "build[ing] consensus" between business and labor, says the Federation's number one priority over the coming year will be its legislative agenda - an agenda that got off to a rocky start with Congress' decision to overturn health and safety regulations aimed at stemming the epidemic of repetitive stress injuries.

Bush Sets New Anti-Union Policies

BY BRIAN OLIVER SHEPPARD

U.S. President George W. Bush signed four new executive orders Feb. 17 aimed specifically at organized labor. Two of these restore executive orders issued by his father that had been rescinded by former president Clinton. The other two are new.

One of the orders restores a Bush, Sr. policy requiring unionized businesses contracting with the federal government to post notices alerting union members that they have a legal right to withhold the portion of their dues that may be used to fund political parties or activities. These "agency fees" cannot currently be withheld unless the worker resigns from the union. The Bush administration hopes it will encourage unionized workers to do just that - leave their unions. Another executive order, also originally issued by Bush, Sr. but overturned by Clinton, bans project labor agreements between contractors and the federal government that allow unions to make binding agreements for compensation for any workers involved in a given project, for the life of that project in exchange for surrendering their right to undertake job actions. These union agreements often benefitted non-unionized workers, as the employer was required to pay them higher wages as well. Some unionists have objected that the agreements restricted workers' rights to undertake job actions to improve working conditions, ensure safety, etc.

Ironically this order contradicts the free market principles that Bush usually espouses. This stance represents the very real fact that elites believe the free market should work freely only when it works against the interests of labor; otherwise, the government must step in to ensure that it does.

The third order dissolves the Clinton-created National Partnership Council, which acted as a forum for union officials to meet with company heads to resolve differences (or make alliances).

The fourth executive order ends a policy of limited job protection under the Clinton Administration for employees of federal contractors. Under this policy, contractors hop-

ing to work with the federal government were required to hire workers that had previously worked on the same contract. Ostensibly designed to reduce unemployment in high-turnover occupations, it was rarely effective. Nevertheless, George W. Bush axed it on February 17th as well.

These new policies have alarmed leadership in the AFL-CIO, coming as they did after revelations by the Bureau of Labor Statistics that union membership fell to 13.5 percent last year.

The IWW's constitution prohibits it from devoting any members' dues to any of the bosses' political parties, Democrat or Repub-

lican. The AFL-CIO is a major contributor to many Democratic Party campaigns, and the Bush orders seem, in part, intent on destroying that sort of union-based political funding. It is also clear that the newest political administration of the boss class intends to legally strip even the reformist trade unions of whatever numbers they may have, and that this stems from a paranoid fear of organized labor of any variety. The hatred by bosses of what Wobblies would consider only the ineffectual, mainstream unionism of the AFL-CIO indicates a ruling class obsessively greedy with its power, and becoming increasingly reactionary.

New Labor Dept. head is boss lackey

BY BRIAN OLIVER SHEPPARD

Elaine L. Chao was confirmed as Secretary of Labor by the US Senate Jan. 31. The US Department of Labor is charged with enforcing existing labor laws, making recommendations for changes, and initiating new federal labor policy.

The Labor post is largely symbolic. The person chosen for the job represents the sort of stance the administration will have towards the country's workers. A labor secretary sets the tone, and provides a figurehead, for which way the government will lean when worker-management disputes erupt. So what sort of background and labor experience does the new Bush labor secretary have?

Ms. Chao has an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School and was vice president of Bank America Capital Markets Group. She was also deputy Transportation Secretary under Bush, Sr. Chao has had little to no experience with organized labor and has never been in a union.

Chao is a fellow at the arch-conservative Heritage Foundation - a privately funded think tank. Heritage is bankrolled by many of the wealthiest corporate executives in the US and is anti-union, anti-labor, anti-welfare, and, in short, anti-working class. Chao is outspoken in her opposition to affirmative action. Her husband, Republican Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, supports leg-

islation to bar union funds from being used for "political purposes." He has also said he thinks union dues should be capped and indexed to inflation, but does not support indexing minimum wage increases to inflation or productivity and in fact has consistently opposed minimum wage increases.

Chao was recruited to head the United Way in 1992 after the organization came under public scrutiny for paying its executives enormous salaries (the prior director had spent \$600,000 of United Way's funds on himself and his teenage girlfriend). Chao took an annual salary of \$195,000, and accepted a lavish parting gift of \$292,500 - which she returned after this came under public scrutiny. She was also director of the Peace Corps under Bush, Sr. The bulk of her experience in the '90s comes from heading these two volunteer-based organizations.

But the workers of America aren't volunteer laborers. They are workers with themselves and families to support. Someone who has had experience working as an upper-crust banking executive, as a right-wing think tank fellow, and as a Transportation secretary, can hardly be someone from, or for, the workers in this system. Like all the political administrations of the past, the new one is squarely on the side of the boss class. Bush's choice for head of the Department of Labor makes this clear.

Northwest Air strike blocked

U.S. President George W. Bush has blocked a strike by Northwest Airlines mechanics for 60 days, invoking provisions of the Rail Labor Act that give the government extensive powers to limit job actions. Workers at several U.S. airlines are considering strike action after months of fruitless government "mediation" efforts.

Northwest's mechanics, cleaners and custodians have been negotiating since October 1996. Talks collapsed Feb. 9 over wages, back pay and other benefits.

Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association national director O.V. Delle-Femine complained of Bush's action. "We're very disappointed. What the president has done is stop the collective bargaining process. He's interfered with the free collective bargaining that we've had in this country for years. It's unprecedented. It's unwarranted." Mechanics picketed the White House March 12 to protest the action, which the union says derailed attempts to revive contract negotiations.

Bush said he would also stop any job actions at other airlines this year. Congress also has the authority to pass legislation to force the parties to abide by a government settlement plan after the 60-day "cooling-off" period has ended.

Delta Air Lines pilots are presently working under a federal court injunction prohibiting pilots from refusing overtime in an attempt to force management to capitulate. Delta and other air carriers routinely rely on massive overtime rather than hire the number of workers necessary to maintain operations. Although overtime is officially "voluntary" courts have repeatedly held that it is illegal for airline workers to refuse overtime in order to bring pressure on the bosses.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Supreme Court has rejected the pilots union's appeal of a court order that the union and two of its officers pay \$45.5 million to American Airlines, the nation's second-largest airline, for failing to halt a sickout in 1999. While the union promptly directed pilots to halt the alleged job action, the court ruled that it had not acted vigorously enough to restore regular operations. The 10-day sickout in February 1999 canceled nearly 6,700 flights.

Get along with scabs, or else...

Now that the Seattle newspaper strike is over, workers are being ordered to be nice to the scabs - or else. At the *Seattle Times*, management has unilaterally amended its "bias-free workplace" policy to prohibit discrimination on the basis of "ideology related to unionism." Forbidden behavior, according to the detailed page-long policy, includes shunning, unwelcome jokes, and any type of retaliation related to the strike.

Flossie Pennington, who served as a picket captain during the strike, was told by her manager that she wasn't friendly enough to the scabs who now infest every department of the *Times*. "I wasn't smiling enough," Pennington says she was told. "My body language was unapproachable."

Since the seven-week strike settled Jan. 8, the union has filed 70 grievances against the *Times*. Management is downsizing, reorganizing, and scaling back editorial coverage. The company says it lost millions of dollars forcing workers out on strike, and now it wants to recoup the money by slashing up to 20 percent of its 2,500 workers. Meanwhile, many strikers are still on the streets while scabs fill their jobs. The company has until July 9 to bring strikers back. Full-timers have been scaled back to part-time, and part-timers have been scaled up. Workers who once worked normal hours now find themselves on a schedule of four 10-hour days a week.

Meanwhile, members of Teamsters Local 763 have ousted former president Jon Rabine, who ordered newspaper drivers to cross picket lines after he imposed a new contract.

Hawai'i AFSCME head skims more than \$200k

A federal grand jury in Honolulu has indicted United Public Workers (AFSCME) state director Gary Rodrigues on charges that he stole more than \$205,000 from union health plans by arranging secret payments to companies owned by his daughter. The two face 43 counts of mail fraud, defrauding a health care benefit program, embezzlement, money laundering and conspiracy. The 13,000-member UPW is one of Hawaii's largest unions.

U.S. Attorney Steve Alm said the \$205,000 cited in the indictment against Rodrigues was a "very, very conservative figure."

Rodrigues has been a union staff member or official since 1965, when he was 23 years old. He has served on Hawaii's judicial selection committee, was appointed by President Clinton to the Advisory Council On Unemployment Compensation in 1994, and served as president of the Hawaii state federation of the AFL-CIO for several years. He

also currently serves on the AFSCME judicial panel as a hearings officer on complaints against union members or officers.

During his tenure as UPW director, Rodrigues amended the union's constitution to give himself nearly absolute power. He led the way in negotiations to give the state's anti-labor governor concessions he dearly wanted and in exchange, Rodrigues was given control over a retirement fund into which the state would pay.

Rodrigues amended the union's constitution to give himself nearly absolute power. He was known to negotiate without the presence of rank-and-file negotiating team members. He led the way in negotiations concluded Dec. 25 to give the state's anti-labor governor concessions he dearly wanted: reduction in sick and vacation leave and a lower starting salary for new employees. Rodrigues broke ranks

with the other public sector unions in giving in on these points. In exchange, Rodrigues was given total control over a deferred compensation retirement fund into which the state would pay. Two years ago the state agreed to a prepaid legal fund for UPW and millions were turned over to it, although no such plan was in existence or has since

been set up.

Rodrigues also aided the governor in maintaining public sector union endorsements and in ensuring no pay hikes for city and state workers in four of the past eight years (two 4-year contracts).

A few months ago, as the investigation was coming to a head, the UPW executive board voted to increase his salary 78% to \$200,000 a year.

Rodrigues' dubious actions began to come to light in fall 1997, when Frank Hirazumi, a rank-and-file board member, ran against him for state director. Hirazumi charged improprieties with Rodrigues' stewardship of union monies and implied he had profited on dealings on the union's log cabin headquarters buildings on several islands. Rodrigues was the sole proprietor selling the logs to the union, and charged more than \$1.1 million for one of the buildings. Rodrigues won the convention election and later moved to have his opponent suspended from membership.

In June 1998, Rodrigues fired longtime UPW staff member John Witeck after a local reporter aired charges of the health insurance plan payments to Rodrigues' daughter. A petition signed by hundreds of UPW mem-

bers later surfaced questioning Rodrigues' dealings. It asked about a \$250,000 settlement from union funds owing to Rodrigues' alleged sexual harassment of his former executive secretary. The petition also cited his using UPW staff members on paid time to work on his house and yard in Bend, Oregon.

Rodrigues never explicitly denied any of the claims in the petition but refused to provide any information. Three rank-and-file chief stewards brought charges against Rodrigues to the international union, but the AFSCME judicial panel member who heard the case decided against them. The full AFSCME international executive board later ratified this whitewash judgment.

Following the federal grand jury indictment, the international union's failure to uphold the rank-and-file members' charges and to correct and censure Rodrigues undermines AFSCME's stature considerably. Time will tell if AFSCME will act now to remove Rodrigues, as many rank-and-file members would like to see done. Rodrigues will otherwise continue to misuse union resources to defend himself on these charges, will continue to receive his large salary, and will have access to all union monies.

Ironworkers president quits

International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers general president Jake West resigned Feb. 23 after 12 years in office. West and other ironworkers officials are under federal investigation for allegedly using union funds to pay for personal expenses.

NYU recognizes TA union

After threatening to tie up its teaching assistants in court challenging their right to unionize, New York University agreed to recognize and bargain with the union representing its graduate student workers, becoming the first private university in the United States to do so. The university changed course after the union announced that it would strike for recognition.

The union did agree to withdraw unfair labor practice charges, and to keep "academic issues" including student fees, admission conditions, teaching methods, degree requirements and faculty supervision off the bargaining table.

Graduate student employees voted to join the UAW in April, but the ballots were impounded by the NLRB while the university appealed. In October, the NLRB's national office recognized the graduate workers as employees and allowed the ballots to be counted.

The University of Washington similarly recognized a UAW local representing its teaching assistants in December, on the eve of a strike that would have disrupted final exams.

Temp firm cheats workers

Washington State charged temp giant Labor Ready more than \$700,000 for cheating on its workers compensation premiums. Auditors found that the company owed \$497,930 in back premiums, plus more than \$236,000 in penalties and interest, for 1998.

Premiums vary according to how risky a given job is. For example, many Labor Ready workers doing construction cleanup (such as digging and moving dirt and landscape construction) were classified as performing grounds maintenance rather than construction work. The first category carries a workers' comp rate of 40 cents an hour; the second, \$1.20.

The Building and Construction Trades Department of the AFL-CIO prompted the audit with a study it issued in October of workers' hours and classifications in Washington and Ohio. Last month, the Ohio Bureau of Workers Compensation found some misclassification, and ordered Labor Ready to pay an additional \$48,000 in premiums.

Six years in court: Overnite loses another appeal

Overnite Transportation Co., the U.S.'s biggest nonunion trucker, says it will appeal a recent 4th Circuit Court of Appeals ruling rejecting its appeal of a National Labor Relations Board ruling that the company had engaged in massive unfair labor practices in an attempt to keep the Teamsters union out of four terminal locations. The union says Overnite workers are entitled to more than \$4 million in back wages.

The case stems from Overnite's attempt to break a 1995 organizing drive by increasing wages for nonunion workers and threatening union supporters with firings. As a result, the union lost elections in Chesapeake, Va.; Lawrenceville, Ga.; Louisville, Ky.; and Bridgeton, Mo. The Teamsters initially had substantial majorities in each terminal, which the NLRB ruled were destroyed by a "litany of serious and pervasive misconduct" against the Teamsters.

Dissenting Judge Paul Niemeyer noted that four years passed between the organizing effort and the federal labor board decision. (Apparently he believes that a criminal who manages to drag out legal proceedings long enough is entitled to get off.) Several more years are likely to pass before Overnite is forced to rehire the illegally discharged workers and recognize the union.

The Teamsters subsequently declared an unfair labor practices strike in October 1999 against the carrier, which has had little effect on its operations.

In the aftermath of the ruling, the Teamsters called on Overnite parent Union Pacific to bring an end to the conflict. Overnite is also appealing another case concerning union-busting at another seven terminals.

Meanwhile, another federal court has dismissed the bulk of a racketeering lawsuit Overnite filed against the Teamsters last year claiming that their strike constituted "tortious interference with business relations" and was "aimed at extorting a labor contract" from the union-busting carrier.

The court dismissed 171 of 221 counts, including charges of attempted murder, extortion, assault, tortious interference, and malicious destruction of property. The court dismissed as irrelevant Overnite's attempt to include material on organizing efforts by the Teamsters in 1945, 1957, 1977 and 1984.

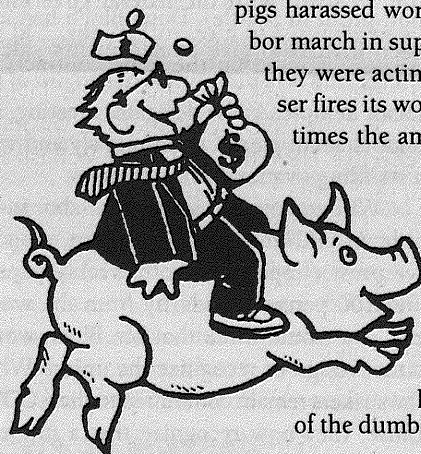
Charges that some picketers may have thrown rocks at scabs remain, pending further investigation.

Free Enterprise

BY ARTHUR J. MILLER

Kaiser Aluminum plants in Tacoma and Spokane recently shut down in order to sell electricity. Since prices are so high right now they are making a great profit, as much as \$500 million. This is how they are able to do it. Kaiser has a contract with the Bonneville Power Authority to buy electricity at a set rate. Now they are turning around and selling that power back to the BPA at nearly 20 times the amount they paid for it.

So here is how it plays out. Workers strike a greedy company that is owned in part by a company that also cuts down old growth redwoods to pay off junk bonds. The Tacoma paper sides with Kaiser against the workers who live in Tacoma. Tacoma pigs harassed workers and supporters, and suppressed a labor march in support of the striking workers, claiming that they were acting in the good of the community. Now Kaiser fires its workers in order to sell electricity at nearly 20 times the amount they paid for it. The city of Tacoma has to increase power bills to the public by 56%.



We are told that humans are the most intelligent life form on Mother Earth. Sometimes I have to wonder about that. Anyone who supports the system that allows what has happened in Tacoma to happen, in my humble view, has got to be some of the dumbest brain-dead fools to ever walk this earth.

Prison labor hits Canada

Canada's first prison-based call centre is now up and running at the Pittsburgh Institution just outside Kingston, Ont. About 20 inmates conduct market research and opinion surveys, earning C\$1.25 to C\$1.75 an hour.

"I think it's completely atrocious," said Rod Hiebert, president of the Telecommunications Workers Union. "What will restrict them from doing other things when this gets going? Where does it end?"

The centre looks much like any other office except that it's swarming with supervisors. Prisoners work seven-hour days, with some overtime.

The call centre was opened at the minimum-security prison last fall by Call-Us Info, a division of Calgary-based Alberta Mining Corp., in partnership with CORCAN, which operates at 32 federal prisons across Canada.

Call-Us Info will be opening two more centers at medium-security prisons in May, at William Head Institution in Victoria and Fenbrook prison in Gravenhurst, Ont.

The company pays minimum wage for each prisoner. However, CORCAN (a government corporation established to exploit prison labor) pockets the majority of prisoners' wages, paying a small portion into prisoner savings accounts.

You ain't seen nothin' yet

The massive layoffs of recent weeks are nothing compares to what outgoing CEO "Neutron Jack" Welch has in mind for General Electric. GE plans to eliminate 75,000 jobs — 15 percent of its workforce — during the next two years. The figure does not include the 28,000 jobs already lost through the closure of GE's Montgomery Ward department store chain. Another 50,000 jobs will be cut at Honeywell, which recently acquired GE.

A fair traffic law

A \$71,400 traffic fine was recently paid by Internet millionaire Jaakko Rytola for going 40 mph in a 25 mph zone in Finland, where such fines are based on income. Rytola's fine set a new record, breaking his previous \$44,100 fine for zigzagging dangerously.

Watch the ads... or go to jail!

When Ohio teenagers DJ and Carlotta Maurer walked out of their classrooms in October to protest the compulsory viewing of Channel One, a television program with commercials which is shown in schools across America, officials realized they had a couple of dangerous radicals on their hands. Principal Patrick Calvin invoked the truancy provision of the school's code of conduct, and 13-year-old DJ and 14-year-old Carlotta were taken away to the Juvenile Detention Center, where they had all day to consider their crime.

Rebuilding the Berlin Wall in Quebec

A veritable Berlin Wall is being constructed in Quebec City to separate demonstrators from delegates to the Summit of the Americas, being held April 20-23. The security zone will cover much of old Quebec City's upper town, both inside and outside the fortress wall.

The international movement against corporate globalization is getting so strong that the World Trade Organization is reportedly looking into holding its next meeting on an island. In Canada, authorities are settling on the next best thing — meeting behind walls, surrounded by riot police who will make sure no demonstrator gets anywhere near the politicians who are planning our future.

The principle agenda item will be the Free Trade Area of the Americas, a proposed trade and finance agreement that aims to

extend the disaster of NAFTA throughout the Americas.

The FTAA negotiations have remained highly secretive, conducted by government bureaucrats behind closed doors, in a sea of corporate lobbyists. All “stakeholders” have had a place at the table except for the workers who will be affected.

A People's Summit will be held April 16-19 in the run-up to the rulers' summit, addressing agricultural, communication, education, environmental, human rights, labor and women's issues posed by corporate globalization. Representatives from social movement organizations across the Americas will be participating, sharing their experiences and discussing strategies for building more effective resistance.

For information on FTAA protests, e-mail: clac@tao.ca web: <http://www.quebec2001.net> tel: 514-526-8946, 2035 St-Laurent Blvd., 2nd fl., Montreal, Quebec H2X 2T3 Canada.

Wobs aid East Timor computer project

BY IAIN MCINTYRE

The recent history of Australia and East Timor is inextricably intertwined due to successive Australian governments' support for the Indonesian military occupation of the former Portuguese colony. In contrast to these government policies many ordinary Australians have supported Timorese independence since the 1975 invasion. Whilst the Australian government continued to drag its feet during the carnage that erupted following the Timorese people's vote for independence, those on the ground voted with their feet engaging in industrial action and attending demonstrations. A year on from the Indonesian withdrawal, ordinary East Timorese remain in need of solidarity and the East Timor Community Computer Project is just one of many grassroots projects seeking to help out.

Much of East Timor remains decimated with most of the population still reliant on outside aid for food. Unemployment in the capital Dili remains around 80% and many houses remain without windows, running water and power. The majority of Australian and UN “aid” has been channelled into funding an unwieldy and undemocratic bureaucracy and making Dili more attractive to corporate investment, instead of addressing these pressing needs.

Australian and other overseas investors have been quick to move in on the opportunities the situation and the CNRT, East Timor's ruling body, have offered. Many of the usual culprits have eyed the population as potential sweat shop fodder whilst others have been quick to try and gain access to its mineral and other resources. Strikes, demonstrations and occupations have already occurred, indicating that the Timorese people themselves are far from ready to put up with this situation.

As noted earlier many Australians have shown their support for the ordinary people of East Timor. Unfortunately much of the public, union and government financial and physical support has been diverted into the hands of the UN and business, with very little of it trickling down to the grassroots. Sadly much of this “aid” has also come in the form of loans.

Last year a number of people involved with the IWW, the Solidarity Infoshop, 3CR, Xchange and other grassroots projects in Melbourne and Brisbane, Australia, decided to respond to reports from friends in East Timor that not enough aid was reaching ordinary people there. Despite the fact that our own resources were limited, it was felt that we could at least respond to the calls for computers and training in their use.

With few schools fully operating and with community organisations and NGOs in need of technical support, the ETCCP was envisaged as a practical way to aid the cause of self-determination.

The ETCCP was up and running by July

with donations of computers, monitors, peripherals, software and other materials as well as financial support. In August a truck and two volunteer technicians made the journey to Timor where they have set up base in Bebonuk, a suburb of Dili that was trashed by the militia. Due to problems with electricity, bureaucracy and the general state of affairs in Timor progress has been slow but steady, and the project has extended beyond its original aim into providing general support for the Bebonuk community as they rebuild their homes and area.

The final aim is to distribute as many free computers as possible to community organisations and to establish a computer school that will be community owned and operated.

The Australian end of the project has continued to raise funds and collect materials. With help from the MUA a container load of computer equipment, children's clothes and toys, and building materials made its way over to Timor in January.

Thus far the project has installed 16 computers for community use in schools and community organizations, repaired several others, and begun training locals in the use of computers. It has also helped with the repairing, rewiring and waterproofing of electrical cabling in a number of houses, laying concrete around the local water pump and repairing sanitation and other community facilities around Bebonuk. The ETCCP truck has also been used to lay gravel to prepare the roads and houses for flooding during the rainy season. Plans to purchase a block and construct a building in Bebonuk for eventual use as a Timorese-run community computer school are underway.

To help out (particularly with monthly pledges) or for more information, you can contact the ETCCP at P.O. Box 756, Brunswick Lower 3056, Victoria Australia. www.solidarity.infoshop.org.au/etccp email: etccp@solidarity.infoshop.org.au

Colombian union leader assassinated

José Luis Guette, president of SINTRAINAGRO's Ciénaga section, was shot to death by motorcycle gunmen on January 24. His murder follows the assassination of the union's general secretary César Herrera in the same area (Magdalena province) on December 13, 1999.

Guette's murder brings to twenty the number of SINTRAINAGRO leaders assassinated in Magdalena in the past decade. In the same period, over 400 rank-and-file SINTRAINAGRO members have paid with their lives for their membership in the union.

Like César Herrera, Guette had received telephoned death threats. These threats were reported to the authorities, but despite numerous requests the government refused to extend police protection to the threatened union leaders.

FTAA Primer

BY ELAINE BERNARD, DIRECTOR, HARVARD TRADE UNION PROGRAM

What is the FTAA?

The Free Trade Area of the Americas is the name given to the attempt to expand the North American Free Trade Agreement to the entire Western Hemisphere (excluding Cuba). The FTAA would create the largest free trade area in the world, encompassing 34 countries in North, Central and South America and the Caribbean, with a combined population of 800 million and a total Gross Domestic Product of \$11 trillion.

What's included in the agreement?

From what details have leaked out, it appears the FTAA combines the worst aspects of the NAFTA and World Trade Organization rules which favor capital, investors and corporations over citizens, democracy and the environment. It even goes further with trade liberalization by introducing new provisions that will give corporations unprecedented rights to pursue an agenda of deregulation and privatization throughout the hemisphere.

What's wrong with free trade and investment?

To understand what is meant by “free trade” it's necessary to ask who is free from what. Like NAFTA, the FTAA seeks to free corporations from government regulation which they say gets in the way of “free enterprise” and trade. The FTAA would permit relatively unrestricted movement of money, capital, goods and services, while at the same time providing investors and corporations with extensive protection of their property rights. It would place serious restrictions on governments' ability to regulate economic activity and even many social services. It would require, for example, that governments treat social institutions — such as education or health care or even social security — as service commodities open to the competitive forces and the dictates of the market and commercial interests. Such trade liberalization has important domestic implications. For example, a country's social programs could be interpreted as “non-tariff barriers” to trade.

In fact, what is termed “free trade” is actually the deregulation of international commerce and the reorganization of many of the institutions and powers of government, not to promote the well-being of its citizens, but to protect and promote the rights and interests of investors and multinational corporations.

What exactly is covered?

The FTAA will demand the abandonment of domestic production in favor of transnational corporate interests. Local agriculture and small farmers producing for local domestic markets will be displaced by agribusiness producing cash crops for export. Countries will have to remove their regulatory impediments to foreign investment, including national environmental laws and regulations, food and drug administration rules regarding foods, and there will be considerable pressure to deregulate electricity, transportation, energy and the natural resource sector, and even open social services to transnational corporations.

What will this mean for working people?

The FTAA will affect the overall social and political context in which public policy decisions are made. The main thrust of the FTAA is to reduce and redirect the role of government, while enhancing the role of the market. This will increase the pressure on the public sector, public enterprise and public programs. It will create a downward pressure on wages, working conditions, and on labor and environmental standards.

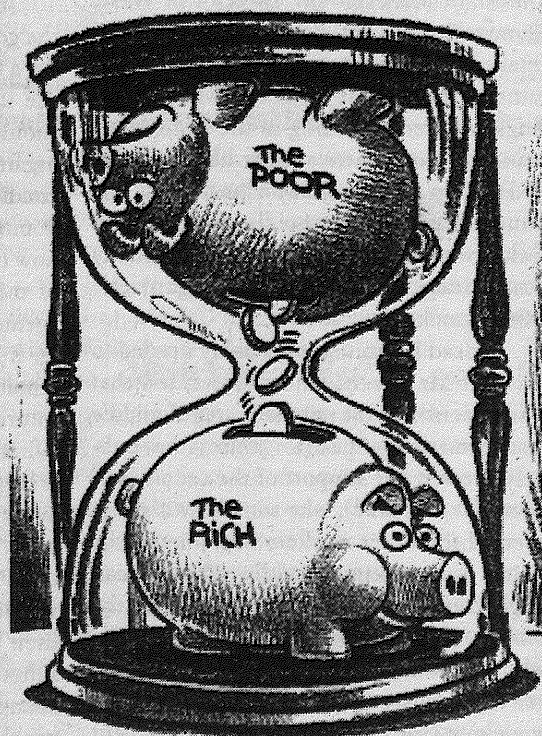
In some countries there is a tradition of government policies which seek to provide equality of outcome as well as opportunity through redistributive programs, where richer regions subsidize poor ones. But the FTAA demands that policies set according to democratic and community values are eliminated and replaced with market principles. Education, health care, even prisons and social security and many other social services must be viewed as simply economic commodities to be shaped by the market.

Is there an alternative?

The underlying assumption of the FTAA — that we can separate investment, trade and, indeed, the economy from social issues and growing income disparities — is fundamentally flawed. The FTAA represents a corporate vision of the integration of the hemisphere's countries, subordinated to the dictates of commerce and the market.

Yet opposition to FTAA does not imply isolationism, protectionism, or the rejection of greater economic cooperation. The FTAA represents one model of economic integration, what is called the neoliberal business model, which removes barriers to the movement of capital but leaves workers and governments paying the bill for the dislocation and adjustment costs.

In place of a “free trade” agreement we should be talking about a fair trade and sustainable development agreement. Such a deal would not be secretly negotiated by government representatives with no input from labor and community groups. A fair trade and sustainable development treaty would actively seek public involvement and include advisory committees on labor, immigration, the environment and consumers. Such a process would make it much more difficult to pretend that such agreements are simply about trade and investment and have nothing to do with communities. A more open and inclusive process would need to look at inequality, immigration, debt relief for the poorest regions and nations, and how trade and economic cooperation could be used to enhance rather than undermine sustainable, healthy communities.



Domino strikers in crushing defeat

After 20 months on the picket line, strikers at the mammoth Domino Sugar refinery in Brooklyn, NY, capitulated Feb. 26. "It's a complete loss," acknowledged Joe Crimi, chief negotiator for the strikers who work at the 143-year-old plant.

For the first nine months of the strike, the 284 workers showed extraordinary solidarity, without anyone crossing the picket line. But then they cracked, with workers trickling across the line as unemployment benefits ran out and Domino showed no signs of budging. By strike's end, a 62-year-old worker slit his wrists and 104 workers had crossed the picket line. The remaining strikers felt so little hope that they voted 56 to 48 to approve a contract virtually identical to a proposal that they unanimously rejected four months before.

The ILA International did not provide strike benefits, although it did establish a hardship fund that strikers could draw against. Unionized Domino plants in Baltimore and New Orleans (whose contract ex-

pired during the dispute) kept operating throughout the strike. In fact, the Baltimore plant sent barges of liquid sugar to the Brooklyn refinery, eliminating the need to process raw sugar, a more labor-intensive procedure.

Workers at parent Tate & Lyle's other plants also kept production lines humming, just as they did during the better-known battle from 1993 to 1995 at its A.E. Staley subsidiary, where Tate & Lyle wore down the union after locking out 750 workers for 30 months at its corn sweetener plant in Decatur, Illinois.

Under the new contract, approved by members of Local 1814 of the International Longshoremen's Association, Domino will cut 110 of 284 jobs at the refinery, slash vacation time, and gut seniority rights.

"We got shafted," said Charles Milan, who has worked for 37 years in the refinery's packaging department. "We got stabbed in the back." Joe Crimi, Local 1814's vice president for sugar workers, agrees:

"The labor movement continues to allow this union-busting company to plunder, pillage and rape contracts, people and their families across America without any kind of all-out fight one subsidiary after another."

Blockheads and company unions

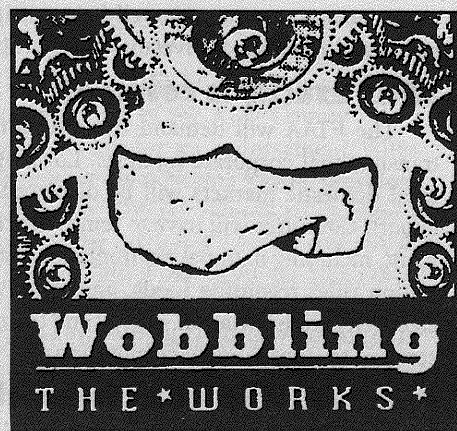
Just when I was becoming seriously worried about finding a topic for this month's column, ACORN management has thankfully rescued me, again. Last month, you might recall, the topic was the boss at Philadelphia's ACORN who refused to recognize the union for fear of breaking the law which he wrongfully believed demanded a nationwide bargaining unit.

This month I'm afraid to report that the misunderstandings continue, as Seattle ACORN boss Phillip Bloch has written to the National Labor Relations Board to inform them that he can't recognize the workers' union since it is dominated by management.

Sometimes I don't hear so well on the phone, since I've got the ringing in the ears from my pre-piecard days working around loud machinery. I thought I had heard wrong when our organizers told me that the COMPANY didn't want to recognize a union which they allege was organized by the COMPANY, meaning themselves. Luckily, having read Alice in Wonderland many times in my early childhood years, paradoxes don't bother me as much as they do others – but this weird logic brought forth much hand-wringing among the office staff at the IWW's Headquarters.

The 1990's Getting-to-Yes touchy-feely style of management has led to a proliferation of common workers with fancy titles like "Assistant Manager" or "Director of Waste Removal" or "Administrator of Telephone Intake and Information Dissemination." The same is the case at ACORN, where every single worker, according to the scant information given to them at their hire, is a salaried manager, responsible for "managing" the non-paid members who the organization seeks to mobilize. The boss has the distinctly non-managerial title, "Head Organizer." What a tricky lot.

A Head Examiner is probably needed to sort out Mr. Bloch, who has decided that since a person in the nebulous area of middle management, the "Lead Organizer," has publicly avowed her support of the union (and went out on strike), she somehow illegally coerced the other workers into joining the union and striking. (Oddly, when "Head Organizer" Bloch refused to recognize the union – like his fellow boss in Philadelphia, who went on to fire every unionist he could get his hands on – he thinks the workers somehow failed to notice that management wasn't such a big fan of the union. Such are



the knots "progressive" managers tie themselves into trying to justify their illegal union-busting.)

Company unions, which HeadBloch seems to be objecting to, are of course illegal under the Wagner Act. A company union is formed and controlled by the company, and is expected to roll over and play dead at the bargaining table when deal-making time comes. They don't tend to strike much. Or ask for much. Or do much of anything. As one might logically conclude, bosses don't tend to complain about situations like this, since they create them. As a matter of fact, our organizer in Philadelphia recently got an e-mail from a person in a Midwestern city who wishes to remain anonymous who was invited by an ACORN boss to speak to workers about unionizing, but not with the IWW. I thought Bloch would want to know this, so he can help us file our ULP for company domination there, too.

In Seattle, the Lead Organizer just had the good sense to know the benefits of having a union at the workplace. She supported the idea, and her co-workers, and stood shoulder-to-shoulder with them as they all organized to demand shorter hours, safer conditions, and regular paychecks. This isn't domination, it's just solidarity. I don't know how the NLRB is going to rule on which side of the fence a "Lead Organizer" sits: management or employee. These decisions differ from region to region, case to case, so it remains to be seen. I'll discuss this more in future columns.

But guessing what the NLRB will decide is largely irrelevant to our work as Wobblies. What we strive to do in any organizing situation is to better the conditions of the workers. People who work 54 hours a week are working too much. People who don't see their paychecks come in on a predictable schedule need to organize to demand a change. And when these people bring these problems to us, we help them resolve the problems by organizing democratically.

"The members are extremely pissed off to say the least ... at the entire labor movement from Sweeney on down, mostly Sweeney.... The labor movement continues to allow this union-busting company to plunder, pillage and rape contracts, people and their families across America without any kind of all-out fight one subsidiary after another."

Workers knew the fight would not be easy, and stayed on the job for eight months after their contract expired in an effort to avoid a strike. But they had outlasted Domino in a seven-month strike in 1992-93. And the company was demanding the right to reopen the contract unilaterally and hire more subcontractors to take union jobs, while surrendering the right to strike.

For months, workers held out hoping that the AFL would launch a boycott or use its much-vaunted political power to force Domino Sugar to settle. But while unions passed resolutions of support and contributed funds for strike relief, they never took the sort of industrial action that could have forced Tate & Lyle to back down. Quite the contrary, while workers were out on the street fighting for their jobs, union workers around the world were providing the boss with the means to destroy them.

It's touching that ACORN management does not want a union dominated by management. Similarly, we don't want a workplace dominated by management, instead we propose one where workers have a real say. That's why we're standing behind the efforts of the locked-out workers in Seattle, the illegally fired workers in Philadelphia, and ACORN workers everywhere who might like a few extra hours a week to, you know, do their laundry, get a haircut, take a nap, or play with their kids.

I hope that next month I'll be on to another topic other than the absurdities tossed around by ACORN bosses as they try to masquerade as law-abiding friends of the oppressed. If you have any ideas, please drop me a line. In the meantime, I'll be keeping close watch for more news of the bizarre.

— Alexis Buss, GST

NLRB sides with AK Steel bosses

BY BRIAN OLIVER SHEPPARD

The National Labor Relations Board has sided with AK Steel in its 17-month lockout of 620 steelworkers in Mansfield, Ohio. The decision infuriated members of United Steelworkers of America Local 169, who say they have been subjected to verbal and physical harassment, a long misinformation campaign, and who now appear to be permanently replaced with scab workers.

The dispute began under Armco, which was acquired by AK Steel almost a month after the lockout began on Sept. 1, 1999. The lockout occurred when the USWA's contract expired without a replacement agreement. The USWA claims AK Steel bargained in bad faith by waiting until the eleventh hour to make a series of offers that they knew would not be acceptable to workers.

AK Steel demanded a 16 percent reduction in the workforce at the Mansfield plant, unlimited mandatory overtime, destruction of long standing seniority practices in favor of management favoritism, and a gutting of workers' pension plans.

The USWA filed an unfair labor practice charge against AK Steel, but the NLRB ruled Jan. 25 that AK Steel had in fact bargained in "good faith."

Steelworkers are vowing to fight on. AK Steel recently threatened to withdraw advertising from a local radio show that was to have a union member as a guest. The USWA has turned to public pressure to encourage AK Steel to settle with the union.

Ergonomics *continued from page 1*

make it more difficult to collect benefits.

But perhaps the most pervasive reason for unreliable injury reporting is fear. Workers are routinely punished for reporting injuries by being docked pay while visiting medical clinics, being sent home without wages, and being fired so employers can save on their health care costs. Although injury rates have skyrocketed in the last two decades, few unions have developed shop floor health and safety programs to protect workers, instead waiting for the government to solve the problem.

In an appeal to Congress not to kill the regulations, United Food and Commercial Workers president Doug Dority offered a graphic example from the meat-packing floor.

"Take a knife and make a forceful cutting motion," he said. "Do the exact same motion again and again and again and again. Make that exact same motion 10,000 times ... 20,000 times ... 40,000 to 50,000 times a day. Do it for five or six days a week, 50 weeks a year.

"You will find out what happens to your hand, your wrist, your elbow, your shoulder. You won't be able to pick up your child. You won't be able to play ball with your kids. You won't be able to do a hundred simple things that most of us take for granted."

One worker's struggle with Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

BY ARTHUR J. MILLER

It took Clinton eight years to act on ergonomic standards, and the Bush monster a month to get rid of them.

This one strikes home for me because I had Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. But my connection to CTS came about before my injury. The P-9 strike was in part over CTS. I had been asked to do a workshop and speak on Big Mountain up there. After I spoke a woman came up to me with her hands in the air crying out, "Look what they did to me!" Her hands showed signs of having had surgery on them. I wondered why she came up to me of all people. I later wished I had taken that as some type of warning. Still her words did haunt me.

About a year later I was working an overhaul on a ship, on such jobs the first thing you do is cut out all the pipe you are going to replace. That meant two months of using a power saw. After a while I started to lose feeling in my hands and at night would wake up in pain.

I went to a doctor when I started dropping things because I could not feel them. I had CTS in both wrists. The doc decided to cut open my right hand and afterwards a large hunk of scar tissue developed. The more I tried to work my hand the worst it got.

I was put on light duty but they did not understand the injury and I was put in the store room counting out nuts and bolts which caused more pain. They gave me a little box that was hooked up to wires on my arm and when the pain came I would turn it on and it sent an electrical charge through my arm that deadened all feeling. After a while I told them where they could stick their little box and everything else and left. I slowly worked my hand back to where I could use it to work. A few years later I had to have surgery on my right hand.

I am left, the doctors told me, with 40 percent of my strength in my right hand and about 60% in my left hand. When I use them a lot they get stiff and sometimes I cannot even make a fist with my right hand. From time to time I still get that old pain.

CTS can be prevented with education and some workplace modifications. But profits come before such things and the rich again are telling us working people to go to hell.

Auto workers occupy Daewoo factories

BY BRIAN OLIVER SHEPPARD

It was a scene that photographers from foreign press agencies did not let slip by their cameras: as snow fell around them in thick white clumps, union delegates from the Korean Metal Workers Federation shaved their heads in a display of defiance. Angry workers cheered as black locks of hair fell onto a carpet of white frost. As each union member arose with a freshly shorn head, he donned a red bandanna – a signal of new labor militancy in the face of economic decline, layoffs and a dismal, uncertain future.

"We've nothing more to lose," union leader Kim Il-sup told state-run KBS-TV. "What can we do but protest?" Choi Jong-hak, a spokesman for Daewoo Motor's labor union, echoed Il-sup's desperation: "We will fight layoffs with all possible means."

Daewoo Motor, a part of the Daewoo Group, fired 1,751 workers after work hours Feb. 16. Management had asked workers to resign voluntarily – and 3,700 did just that. But the rest refused to voluntarily go away. The mass firing came after union negotiators offered a last-ditch compromise whereby management would promise to rehire workers after a four-month unpaid "leave of absence." But management refused even this and broke off further talks.

"We have sent dismissal notices to 1,751 workers," Kim Sang-won, a company spokesman, announced. "With it, we have now completed our workforce restructuring."

But that was not the last that Daewoo would hear from the workers. Six hundred laid-off workers returned to Daewoo's massive main plant in Pupyong, a town about twenty miles west of Seoul. On that Friday night, after many of the union members publicly shaved their heads, they used a forklift to smash open the factory gates and begin an occupation. Highly organized and determined to take back what they had built and sustained for so many years, the workers secured their factory and began a weekend-long sit-in strike that ended with thousands of armed riot police descending onto the compound.

Police helicopters flew overhead February 19, broadcasting warnings to workers inside the factory. Riot police, supported by heavily armored personnel vehicles and fire trucks, amassed outside the factory gates, awaiting orders to begin siege if workers did not disperse. Many of the families of the occupying workers had come to stay inside the sprawling complex with their loved ones, but as the situation grew more dangerous they came from the gates in ones, twos, and threes. Government buses waited outside the plant to take them into custody.

Black pillars of smoke arose from the plant as workers began burning tires and furniture to stay warm in the cold winter air. When it became apparent the police would storm the plant, workers met them en masse, wearing ski masks, heavy dark jackets, and wielding long pipes in anticipation of police billy clubs. Fire trucks sprayed freezing water on the workers to get them to disband, but workers replied by spraying fire extinguishers at the cops. The workers also

brought out hoses from the plant to douse the cops in turn.

About 4,000 riot police armed with bulletproof shields, helmets and clubs finally stormed the plant on Monday. A mass melee ensued during which there were at least a dozen injuries. "Guarantee our right to survive!" workers shouted as they charged into a column of interlocked police shields. Neither the government nor the company was willing to do that, so police responded with beatings and arrests. The battle lasted about an hour, during which the vastly outnumbered autoworkers hurled firebombs and other projectiles into the ranks of the storming capitalist goon squad. Police detained at least 60 workers while many fled to outlying areas of the massive compound, chased by helicopters and search teams.

That same day, seven Daewoo current and former executives were also arrested. In all, 34 Daewoo executives and accountants face charges that they illegally generated over \$20 billion dollars for themselves using falsified trade documents. Prosecutors say that at least \$8 billion was hidden as a private slush fund for Daewoo Group founder Kim Woo-choong.

Daewoo's "restructuring plan," entailing some of the heaviest lay-offs in recent Korean history, was imposed by banks as a condition for loans to save the car company from utter collapse. These loans would also continue the exorbitant salaries that upper management demands no matter how many are to be laid off. Last year, however, Korean Confederation of Trade Unions President Dan Byung-ho warned of the economic casualties that Daewoo would be likely to cause if it continued down its current course.

On April 19, 2000, Byung-ho declared that the KCTU believed converting Daewoo and other car Korean car companies "into public enterprises is the best and only possible means to guarantee that they continue to contribute positively to the survival ... [of the] automobile industry in Korea, and [to] the broader health of the national economy and employment and welfare of workers." He also criticized the government's focus on foreign investment. "The two years of structural adjustment programs of the government guided by the IMF saw a senseless bargain sale of national assets to foreign concerns," he said. "In the process, the rich have taken over most of the benefits, becoming even richer."

But attracting foreign investment and even ownership was the course that Daewoo sought. Last September Daewoo entered talks with General Motors to negotiate a buyout. GM reportedly said that it would be interested only if Daewoo downsized its workforce.

Spanish CNT Rallies 3,500 Against Labor Reform

Sunday, February 4, the anarcho-syndicalist National Confederation of Labor (CNT-AIT), held a demonstration in Madrid against the latest government Labor Reform legislation. 3,500 workers marched from Atocha to the Puerta del Sol, chanting slogans against the labor reform, against the attacks of the government and the bosses on the working class, against the trade unions that negotiate behind the backs of the workers, and against the immigration law. They also shouted out for direct action, self-management and unity in the workers' struggle.

The peaceful attitude of the demonstrators contrasted with the continuous provocations of the riot police who tried, without success, to arrest two workers and who surrounded the demonstrators throughout the whole march.

Class war in S. Korea

continued from page 1

themselves inside the Pupyong plant. Early the next day they were joined by 50 more workers who slipped past police lines.

Some 2,500 riot police blocked all gates into the plant and clashed with hundreds of other workers trying to join the occupation.

On the 19th 4,100 riot police raided the plant to end the sit-in and arrest union leaders they said organized the sit-in. Workers fought police but were unable to hold the plant.

Frightened workers were running and children and wives of the workers were crying. After the mothers were forced from the plant, the children were left surrounded by riot police. Police said they had detained 84 workers but were still hunting KCTU leader Kim Il-Sup.

Fighting continued throughout the following week.

On Feb. 20 hundreds of riot police were forced back as 2,000 workers hurled firebombs and wielded metal pipes as they marched on the plant. Demonstrators reportedly burned a police bus, injuring two policemen inside. Protests continued into the night as some 600 union members took the rally to downtown Pupyong, but workers failed to retake the plant.

Metal workers in Changwon, Kunsan and Pusan also struck to protest the government violence.

On Feb. 21st, 3000 workers and students gathered at Pupyong subway station for a march on the plant but police arrested people as they attempted to leave the station. Around 4:50 50 autoworkers occupied part of Kyung-in highway demanding "Kim Dae-jung should resign!"

On Saturday, the 24th, violence once again broke out as 7,000 riot police again blocked Pupyong Station where the KCTU had planned to hold a mass rally.

Shouting "Cancel the layoffs!" about 2,000 Daewoo workers and family members, along with student activists and KCTU militants, marched through the streets of Pupyong. Some 800 protesters occupied an eight-lane boulevard and burned tires, sending thick columns of smoke billowing into the sky. About 200 workers fought with police, some swinging steel bars and throwing dozens of firebombs.

In Pusan, Korea's second-largest city, 700 workers marched through downtown streets demanding the cancellation of the layoffs.

KCTU head Dan Byong-ho vowed to continue to fight until layoffs are scrapped, saying Daewoo Motor's layoffs were the result of the Kim Dae-jung government's unfair economic restructuring which demands only workers make sacrifices.

Meanwhile Daewoo management declared that they would soon announce massive layoffs at overseas plants, including those in Poland. The Polish passenger car unit FSO has agreed with its union on a plan to slash 1,294 employees, or 26.2 percent of the 4,943-strong workforce, as part of its restructuring efforts, according to Daewoo.

On March 6 Daewoo proclaimed its intention to resume operations at the Pupyong plant the next day. In response the KCTU called for protest rallies in front of the factory, and declared its intention to storm the factory if the opportunity presented itself.

On the 7th 1,500 protesters rallied outside the plant chanting: "Down with the government of President Kim Dae-Jung which is forcing workers out of jobs." Once again there were violent clashes with riot cops.

About 200 former Daewoo Motor workers and their families were taken into custody by police after they lay down in the street to block buses of scabs heading for the factory. A police helicopter hovered overhead, broadcasting warnings to the protesters to disperse or face arrest.

Some 1,500 workers at a provincial plant in Changwon also walked off the job for several hours on in sympathy with laid-off workers at the main plant.

The resistance and struggle is not only aimed at securing jobs but also at stopping the neo-liberal policy of the Kim Dae-jung government.

Write for the Industrial Worker

This is your newspaper, and we need you to write for it. We're particularly interested in articles on IWW organizing and job actions in your industry, but are also looking for reports of exemplary acts of solidarity, innovative tactics, and other stories that might inspire others to do likewise.

Also of interest are articles on problems facing workers in the no-longer-booming high tech industries (and, of course, some solutions), on globalization from below, and stories of shop floor resistance.

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This month in labor history: Ludlow

On April 20, 1914, National Guardsmen and security guards in Ludlow, Colorado, killed 18 miners. The striking mine workers and their families had set up tents outside the Rockefeller-owned Colorado Fuel and Iron Company and were protesting for better wages, shorter hours, and better working conditions. Their tents were set ablaze and as they fled they were fired upon. Thirteen of the dead were children, two were women, and three were men.



Last summer, a state court declared the country of Spain the rightful owner of two sunken ships just off the Virginia coast. It has been estimated that at least 800 Spanish ships have sunk in the coastal waters of the Caribbean and the American Southeast. According to the court, Spain is the rightful owner of the two wrecks rather than the salvagers who found them. Spain was joined in this court battle by Great Britain and Freedomland. No mention was made of Mexico, Peru or any of the other countries where this plunder came from.

The overriding interest in the salvaging of these ships is the great quantities of gold that the conquistadores plundered from these countries, not to mention the suffering of the indigenous peoples and African slaves who extracted the gold that was being shipped to Spain.

Columbus, the genocidal maniac who is dressed up in the history books as a great navigator and was only able to man his three ships with prisoners from the Spanish dungeons, coerced the indigenous Caribbeans to bring him gold or suffer dismemberment. But old Chris was only the first of many to follow, whose greed for the shiny yellow metal plundered the cultural heritage of the indigenous peoples of this hemisphere.

Fraudulent artifacts have become a widely practiced home industry, which is something your scribe does not by any means disapprove of. Through the pressures of economic contingency, many unnamed artisans have been keeping the creativity of their antecedents alive in our own time. I view this as an authentic example of true "free enterprise," and would never lift a finger to discourage it.

Considering the suffering of the indigenous peoples and the kidnapped Africans who did the nasty work of extracting the gold, can Spain or any other European power, including Freedomland, have any moral claim to any wealth salvaged from these shipwrecks? It is to be expected that the salvagers aren't very happy about this ruling, but your scribe shall not shed any tears over their situation. They have not gone through all the trouble and expense for the sake of unearthing historical artifacts, other than such historical artifacts consisting of the shiny yellow metal. They just got nudged out by bigger and more powerful crooks.

One of the reasons that the field of archeology has a bad name among indigenous peoples is that cultural sites and graveyards are being dug up without the input or consent of the descendants of the builders of these sites. This is especially true in Freedomland. The archeologists depend upon funding from corporations or rich individuals. The benefactors may become impatient if the archeologist spends too much time on anything other than extracting jewelry or precious metals. Unfortunately lumped in with the archeologists are the souvenir hunters who have been guilty of desecrating many sacred sites.

Being a subscriber to an archeological magazine, your scribe reads about the difficulties in dealing with the problem of fraudulent archeological artifacts which are extremely difficult to distinguish from the authentic articles.

Prestigious museums have been hoodwinked into paying fabulous prices for skillfully executed replicas of antiquity. Even millionaires have gotten ripped off by the clever imitations of some nameless artisans.

Fraudulent artifacts have become a widely practiced home industry, which is something your scribe does not by any means disapprove of. Through the pressures of economic contingency, many unnamed artisans have been keeping the creativity of their antecedents alive in our own time. I view this as an authentic example of true "free enterprise," and would never lift a finger to discourage it. I have been warned prior to visiting the pyramids in Mexico not to purchase what the peddlers tell the tourists are original artifacts. Being a graphic artist myself, I am not concerned if the piece I buy was made hundreds of years ago by the ancients or was made the day before by one of their living descendants. To me it is still art.

One of the many enterprises I have contempt for is the art market. Artists from bygone years, their output is being sold for sums of money they never saw in their own lifetimes. Poor old Van Gogh, who only sold one painting in his life and died in poverty; his canvases are being sold for millions of dollars. However, there are painters who have been imitating the old masters and managing to keep themselves well-fed, leaving the art dealers the expense of costly equipment to chemically analyze if a painting is authentically old and done with the same type of pigments that were available at the time.

The art dealers, who are devoid of any creativity, are becoming fat off the labors of some artists who never saw the kind of money the dealers charge for what they produce. Contemptible as art dealership is, it is but one of the many examples in our present society where things are judged by their sale value rather than by their aesthetic value. I am fond of one little anecdote from the biography of the impressionist painter Maurice Utrillo, who had been a heavy drinker. At a time in his life when he finally started gaining recognition and his paintings started selling, his landlord came to him and asked for a favor. "For years I have been putting up with your drunken messes and nursemaiding you, I ask of you a small favor. Your work is now selling for good prices. Here are some paintings I have done myself. Would you put your signature on them so I can made a little money?" According to the biography, Utrillo happily obliged.

A few years later I saw a photo in the newspaper of an arthritic woman watching a bonfire. What was being burned were fake Utrillos that, if genuine, would be worth millions of dollars. According to the caption, they were being destroyed to protect the art market. Your scribe could not help but think that if these forgeries were so well executed that chemical analysis was needed to determining their non-authenticity, they had to be works of art in their own right. It shows the high esteem the art dealers have for art. For that reason I don't sign any of my paintings. They can survive on their own merits.

Let's get rid of those whose only art and talent is fleecing us of the product of our labor!

— C.C. Redcloud

Book Review:

Fight or Be Slaves

REVIEW BY HARRY SIITONEN

Albert V. Lannon, **Fight or Be Slaves — The History of the Oakland-East Bay Labor Movement**, University Press of America, 2000, 243 pp., \$26.50.

There's been plenty written about the 1934 General Strike and other epic labor struggles in the city of San Francisco, but relatively little is known about the labor movement in the Oakland-East Bay region, just a short stretch of water away.

For instance, how many people know that a general strike took place in Oakland in 1946, or, for that matter, that the San Francisco General Strike encompassed both sides of the Bay?

In this book, Albert Lannon, a labor educator and former president of Warehouse Local 6 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, enlightens us about a very old and militant labor tradition in the East Bay. The IWW has been a part of that rich history, and Lannon sympathetically gives us our due. He is of Finnish descent on his mother's side and his maternal immigrant grandfather, Isaac Lund, had been a Wobbly working in copper mines in Montana and North Dakota nearly a century ago.

It is refreshing to see a book on organized labor that doesn't just say: "what a glorious past the IWW has had; too bad it's dead." Lannon knows differently and writes about us in the here and now in the East Bay, as well as our earlier history. He has been chair of the Labor Studies Department at Laney Community College in Oakland for several years. A number of local Wobblies have taken these classes at Laney and have been active in the department's Labor Studies Club. He writes of our participation in the turning away of the ship Neptune Jade as the bosses attempted to dump scab cargo from Liverpool at the Port of Oakland in 1996. Also cited is our successful organizing of the recycling workers at the Berkeley Ecology Center.

The book includes some of our earlier history as well. One example: In January 1912, Oakland cops had banned IWW street meetings at 11th & Broadway. The Wobs secured a permit for another at 9th & Broadway, and a hundred cops came to bust up that meeting too. So the group, carrying the red flag, marched to a nearby Socialist Party meeting. The cops attacked them again and took away their banner. Another charge drove the Wobs into the hall. So much for free speech!

Of course, most of the book isn't about us. But it's a detailed, informative and readable book of all that's happened in the tumultuous history of the East Bay labor movement, including the general strikes.

The Depression, the wars, organizing, strikes, the internecine warfare within the

left, the 1920s American Plan to destroy unions are all detailed. It's a colorful, anecdotal exposition. It portrays the heroism and militancy that has characterized East Bay labor. Yet it doesn't whitewash things such as bureaucratic union corruption, racism and the difficulty women and racial minorities have had in getting access to jobs and into

Lannon recognizes a "native radicalism that grows from the needs and struggles of working [people], ... working people ... can figure out things for themselves and make the right decisions..."

all-white, all-male craft unions. Included is a touching portrait of the history of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, which played such a significant role in helping bring black workers into the labor movement. In fact, the title of the book, "Fight or Be Slaves," is the motto of the Sleeping Car Porters and is the logo of the union's banner.

One amusing 1970s incident brings into focus the issues of class, racism and sexism in dealing with one particularly bigoted and thick-witted employer representative. A hospital administrator, who hated unions to begin with, attacked Louisiana-born Shirley Ware, the first African-American business agent for Hospital Workers Local 250:

"Let me tell you something, girl; don't you come back into my office with pants on or with that (natural) hair style." Ware backed out of the room saying, "Yes sir, thank you very much." She "went out and bought a pair of hot pants, fluffed her natural to twice its normal size, went to the administrator's office, sat down, crossed her legs, stuck her finger in his face, and told him off. He had a heart attack that night."

Lannon paints a grim picture of the labor movement's current situation in a globalized economy and the overwhelming odds working people are struggling against today, which he compares to the 1920s when the American union movement was nearly decimated. But he does see hope in the developing resistance to the arrogance of modern capitalism, so dramatically exemplified by the 1999 Battle of Seattle.

It's an honest book, in which Lannon concludes that "the Industrial Workers of the World were right when they declared that 'the working class and the employing class have nothing in common.'" (The AFL-CIO's official line still preaches labor-management harmony. That's why John Sweeney is still "seeking a place at the table" in WTO circles.)

Lannon also recognizes a "native radicalism that grows from the needs and struggles of working men and women of all races and nationalities, ... that believes that working people, given all the information, can figure out things for themselves and make the right decisions, ... that they do okay without the vanguard groups telling them the current politically correct line."

My primary problem with the book is its price, but that's about the price range for new books these days. If you have the bucks, *Fight or Be Slaves* would be a valuable addition to your library.

"The freedom that we want is our own"

"For them, freedom is the freedom to buy or sell. They want us, we who are already screwed, to be able to buy and sell as well. The only things that we can sell are our blood and our hands, and even still we have to sell them very cheaply. This is not the freedom that we want... It's not the freedom to buy what we want. In sum, it's not neoliberalism that we want.

"The freedom that we want is our own. It is the freedom to choose and to decide ... It is being able to choose and to decide how they are going to govern us, how they are going to organize us, what kind of work is most important..."

"There is a difference between their justice and our justice. Their justice is a prostitute, and beyond that she is very poorly paid. Let's see: how many bankers are in jail? How many industrialists? How many plantation owners? How many landlords...? No, sir, the prisons are filled with poor people — with Indians, with workers, with employees. That's their justice — justice from above that has a price. ... And he who cannot pay it becomes the crime. Our justice is for everyone according to his work. He who works more can receive. ... The justice that we, the indigenous, practice is much more advanced than the justice that they offer."

— Subcommandante Marcos, Feb. 28, 2001

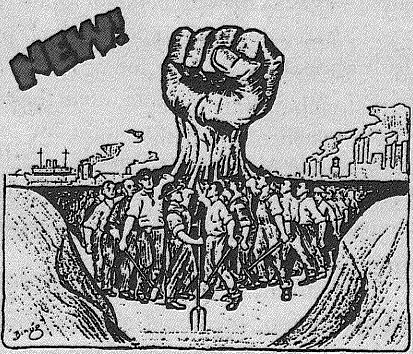
books for rebel workers

Featured this month: Down in the Mines

Paint Creek Miner: Famous Labor Songs & Poems from Appalachia

by Charles Patterson

In 1912-13, West Virginia coal miners fought a bitter strike, ultimately crushed by military repression. This pamphlet, first published by Appalachian Movement Press in 1970, collects poems and songs that emerged from that strike, most by the IWW's Ralph Chaplin. A short introduction offers a biography of Chaplin and labor journalist Elmer Rumbaugh, and a capsule history of the strike. **18 pp. \$2.50**



Compact Disk: Coal Mining Women

Coal Miners have written many of the labor movement's most stirring anthems. This compact disc is a compilation of miners' songs, sung by Hazel Dickens, Sarah Gunning, the Real World String Band, and Florence Reece singing her classic "Which Side Are You On." The women singing on this album have spent their lives in the coal fields, and singing at union rallies and on picket lines across the Appalachian district. The songs on this album celebrate community, women's strength, and struggle. **20 songs \$15.00**

The Legacy of the Bunker Hill Mine by Arthur J. Miller Bunker Hill Mine's turbulent 100-year history is examined in this first-hand account of nightmarish working conditions, environmental devastation, and theft of indigenous lands. **\$2.00**

Limited quantities available of this book on a vital and historic example of unionism
The Making of a Strike: Mexican Silver Workers' Struggles in Real Del Monte, 1766-1775 by Doris Ladd
In the summer of 1766, Mexican silver miners rebelled against wage cuts, organizing the first strike in North America. This is the story of their triumph despite imprisonment and attempts at forced labor; a social history of how the workers built their solidarity at a time when the world *huelga* (strike) had not yet entered the Spanish language. **200 pp. \$16.00**

Big Trouble

by J. Anthony Lukas

When former Idaho governor Frank Steunenberg, who spent his career placing the state government at the disposal of the mine bosses, was assassinated Dec. 30, 1905, Pinkerton detectives and state prosecutors quickly pinned the blame on three Western Federation of Miners officials. The case against them was so weak that prosecutors had the unionists kidnapped in the middle of the night and rushed to Idaho in order to avoid an extradition hearing. When Big Bill Haywood went on trial in the summer of 1907, the entire labor movement was on alert. Hundreds of thousands of workers marched in protest demonstrations, and the IWW threatened a general strike if the frame-up was carried through. In *Big Trouble*, Lukas examines every facet of the case, from the sensationalized press coverage to the prosecution's attempt to manufacture evidence and intimidate witnesses. Despite the lack of any substantive evidence, and plenty of evidence suggesting otherwise, Lukas concludes that the three were guilty but that a fair trial was impossible in the heated labor climate of the day. Still, this is a rich, often engaging narrative of one of the labor frame-ups of the 20th century, and seems sure to endure as the definitive history of the trial. **875 pages, Hardcover, published at \$32.50.**



Available from the IWW Literature Department for just \$15.00

IWW Literature

Little Red Songbook 36th Edition

103 labor songs to fan the flames of discontent from around the world, with music. Includes songs by Joe Hill, Billy Bragg, Anne Feeney, Utah Phillips, and more. **\$10.00**

One Big Union An introduction to the structure, methods and goals of the Industrial Workers of the World. **\$2.00**

A New Union Vision by Arthur J. Miller A discussion of the present-day need for democratic, revolutionary unions. **\$2.00**

The General Strike by Ralph Chaplin The classic text – a call for organization. **\$2.00**

Labor History

Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology

Compiled and edited by Joyce L. Kornbluh Culled from Wobbly periodicals from the movement's founding in 1905 to the present, *Rebel Voices* presents pamphlets, stories, songs, poems, courtroom testimony, skits, cartoons and illustrations that bring the story of the "minutemen of industrial unionism" to life in native accents. – *Detroit Labor News* **\$24.00**

The Fragile Bridge: Paterson Silk Strike, 1913 by Steve Golin

A discussion of the challenges faced in the relationship between workers and the radical bohemians of Greenwich Village. A good discussion of the "self-activity" of the workers involved in the strike. **\$17.00**

The Great Bisbee Deportation by Rob E. Hanson Wobblies so worried the authorities of Bisbee, Arizona, that the state ran them out of town. This comprehensive account brings the events of the day alive. **\$2.00**

Solidarity Forever by Stewart Bird, Dan Georgakis, and Deborah Shaffer Oral histories of IWW members. **\$10.00**

Strike! by Jeremy Brecher A classic text – a history of American workers' struggle from a working-class viewpoint, arguing that class upsurges are based in everyday life and rank-and-file initiative. While this edition is somewhat less optimistic than the original, it still provides rich detail of workers' rebellions throughout American history, and abundant evidence for the proposition that workers are fully capable of making our own history, should we set our minds to the task. **\$22.00**

Juice Is Stranger Than Friction: Selected Writings of T-Bone Slim.

T-Bone Slim was one of the IWW's best-loved columnists. Working-stiff, hobo, and revolutionist, T-Bone created a language all his own to lambast the plutocrats, scissorbills and fad-dists of his day. This collection includes columns, aphorisms & excerpts from organizing pamphlets. Funny, dazzling, biting and lyrical, T-Bone Slim is as readable today as ever. **\$12.00**

Organizing Help

The Couriers are Revolting!

by Des Patchrider
A lively and candid pamphlet on how the Dispatch Industry Workers Union organized English bike messengers from 1989 to 1992. Eventually this effort petered out but their innovative style of organizing provides an inspiration to all of us. **26pp \$3.50**

A Troublemaker's Handbook: How to Fight Back Where You Work-and Win! by Dan La Botz. An encyclopedic work on worker initiative and organizing on the job. Goes beyond business unionism as the latter cannot deal with today's climate of intensified corporate aggression. Shows that sitdown strikes still aren't dead and immigrant workers can be organized. **262pp \$17.00**

No Justice, No Piece!: A Working Girl's Guide to Labor Organizing in the Sex Industry by the hell-raisin' hussies who organized the Exotic Dancers at San Francisco's Lusty Lady Theater

This is an excellent resource for anyone involved in organizing their workplace, but is especially geared towards sex industry workers. From tales of the working conditions at the peep showroom which inspired a successful SEIU drive, to direct action strategies for dealing with wrongful firings, and easy-to-read explanations of the legal process, the girls from Lusty Lady have made a very valuable contribution to the labor movement with this manual. *No Justice* also includes sample leaflets, examples of union busting techniques, legal forms, and media attention they received.

61 page spiral-bound manual **\$6.95**

Union Democracy

Democracy Is Power: Rebuilding Unions from the Bottom Up by Mike Parker & Martha Gruelle. This book offers practical ideas of how the rank and file can run unions. Major discussion of Teamsters for a Democratic Union experiences in this area. **254pp \$17**

Cool Stuff

Music for Rebel Workers Compact Discs

Making Speech Free

A live concert by Utah Phillips. **\$15**

Rebel Voices

20 IWW songs, sung by Wobbly entertainers. **\$15**

Don't Mourn – Organize!

14 songs by and about Joe Hill, labor martyr. Includes performances by Billy Bragg, Utah Phillips, Pete Seeger, Hazel Dickens, and Paul Robeson **\$17**

IWW Buttons

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Stop Exploiting Student Workers \$1
Cat: If Provoked, We Will Strike \$1
Fire Your Boss \$1 Direct Action Black Cat **\$1**

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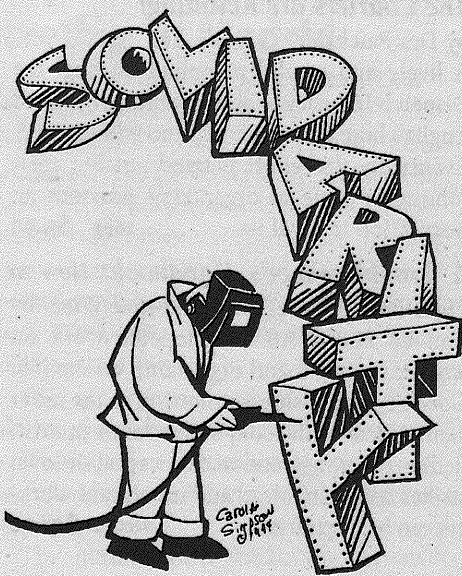
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4-Hour Day

Fighting Union

Can't reform Capitalism

Workers resist bosses the whole world 'round



Solidarity stops airline bosses

An attempt by Hungarian state airline Malev to break a strike by sending planes abroad for maintenance collapsed after unionists in Austria, Germany and Poland refused to handle the scab work. Instead, the airline was forced to suspend operations.

"Mean-spirited" polities fight Aussie minimum wage hike

Australian Workplace Relations Minister Tony Abbott has rejected a union campaign to raise the country's minimum wage by \$28 a week, instead proposing a \$10 increase that at about 2 percent would lag far behind the 6 percent inflation rate. ACTU Secretary Greg Combet called the proposal mean-spirited. "What Mr. Howard and Mr. Abbott are really saying is that they think the real wages of low-paid Australians are too high and should be cut," he said.

Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows that some 30,000 workers went without meals or could not heat their homes last year, while more than 200,000 said their standard of living has fallen over the past two years.

Unionist on hunger strike

Miguel Garcia Plaza was fired by the Parador Company at a hotel in Granada, Spain, in March 2000 when he spoke against physical abuse of employees by management. [Brass-knuckles were being used to "discipline" the maids and other workers.] On March 18, Miguel began a hunger strike, insisting that he be reinstated to his job. Other Parador workers declared a work-stoppage in support of Miguel. On March 30, the Spanish CNT, the union for these hotel-workers, made an urgent appeal for solidarity.

The hunger strike by Miguel Garcia Plaza ended in April when the matter was taken into the Spanish courts. At every step, from trial court to appeals courts, Miguel and the union won. The courts ordered that Miguel be reinstated. Nevertheless, Parador has refused. Because Miguel criticized the "discipline" of management, the company accuses him of being disloyal.

On February 17, 2001, Miguel Garcia Plaza began a new hunger strike, insisting that he be reinstated in his job. The CNT asks that faxes of protest be sent to: Ana Isabel Marino Ortega, President of the Paradores Company, 011.34.91.516.6660; and Juan Costa Clement, Secretary of the State Tourism Office, 011.34.91.457.2103. Messages of support for Miguel Garcia Plaza may be faxed to 011.34.91.420.2749 or 011.47.22.305.465.

In the U.S., Marketing Ahead, at 433 Fifth Avenue in New York City, 10016, is an agent for the Paradores Company. Faxes may be sent to them at 212-686-0271. They also have a toll-free number: 1-800-223-1356.

Additional information [in Spanish] about the dispute can be found on the Internet at <<http://www.cnt.es>>. It is marked urgent: "Huelga de hambre!"

Direct action hits Russian labor law 'reform'

BY MARK HARRIS

The Multiregional Alliance of Trade Unions "Defense of Labor" has been taking a hard line against the Putin government's attempts of bring Russia in line with WTO requirements.

The government is pushing through the Duma labor law "reforms" which would permit employers to terminate workers at will and change working conditions without negotiations.

The new code effectively abolishes the 8-hour work day and legal protection of union activists from bosses' vengeance, legalizes unlimited overtime work without overtime pay, and weakens protections for working mothers with small children.

"Defense of Labor" has utilized standard direct action techniques such as seizure of factories and mines, blockading highways, etc. Last year workers blockaded a major road in southern Russia for five days. Despite threats of criminal charges by the government, the strike held, and was victorious.

Recently, the so-called communists in the Russian government have sent a request to the ethics committee of the State Duma to investigate Oleg Shein, the deputy who is also a co-chair of "Defense of Labor." Their complaint strikes an odd tone for an organization that purports to stand for the interests of the working class:

"For the attainment of his goals OV Shein is not even averse to violations of the laws of Russia, calling workers to illegal strikes, blockades of highways, rail lines, arousing social hatred among the workers... Furthermore, the Alliance of Workers' Unions 'Zashchita' headed by O.V. Shein has incited to 'take all real power,' establish workers' control at the factory and workers power in the country."

Well now here's an embarrassment. The communist authorities are shocked that someone might actually suggest shop floor workers' control. Didn't Trotsky settle all that in 1920 with the expulsion of the Worker's Opposition?

ICEM reaches intl. industrial pact

BY BRIAN OLIVER SHEPPARD

In what may be the first worldwide industrial agreement between workers and management, the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers has begun negotiations with the International Council of Chemical Associations regarding worker safety. ICCA is a trade association of chemical companies from various countries, while ICEM-affiliated unions represent 20 million workers globally.

The ICEM hopes for an agreement ensuring that enforceable workplace safety guidelines are developed under the industry-initiated Responsible Care plan. Responsible Care dates from the late '80s and was developed by chemical manufacturers as a set of self-proposed standards for ensuring environmental sustainability and protection. Critics say it is an insincere attempt to appear to be environmentally concerned and was developed to avoid potential government regulation in the wake of several chemical disasters.

The groups reached a joint working document which is now being considered by ICCA affiliates and could be ratified as early as next month.

Assault & fraud beats independent Maquila union

BY DAN ELGIN

Fired members of the independent Union of Duro Bag Workers chanted their demands for a fair election to Duro thugs and managers March 2 in the border town of Rio Bravo, Tamaulipas, Mexico.

The government-run election robbed the workers of their right to be represented by a union of their own choosing. The final vote, 498 to 4 against the independent union, followed a campaign of intimidation and pay-offs leading up to the election.

But Duro workers will maintain their organization and continue to fight for their rights. Sylvia Martinez, a Duro worker, responded to the election by saying, "They are the losers and we are the winners because we won our dignity."

The current company-dominated government union, the Paper and Cardboard Workers Union (a member of the Mexican Workers Confederation - CTM), will be replaced by a similarly company-dominated union, the Cardboard and Paper Workers Union (a member of the Revolutionary Federation of Laborers and Farmworkers - CROC). The CTM is the officially recognized representative of the workers for the contract they have been working under; however, it withdrew just before the election. The CROC provided as many as a hundred thugs to terrorize Duro workers in the weeks before the election.

In the past 10 months 150 of the mostly women and teenagers who work inside the plant have been fired. Demands for the company to implement safety conditions in the gift bag factory were ignored. When workers took over their union local by electing supporters who vowed to fight for their interests, their elected representatives were fired by the company and removed from the union by CTM officials early last year. The workers then formed their own independent union.

A work stoppage, a strike, and several months of encampment outside the plant gates until the encampment was moved to the town center due to police repression all contributed to forcing the government to recognize the independent union and call the election. National and international solidarity recognizing the Duro workers' struggle has pressured Hallmark, one of the Rio Bravo plant's main customers, Duro corporate offices in Ludlow, Kentucky, and the Mexican government.

The six union committee representatives who were allowed into the plant to witness the actual vote reported mass intimidation of their fellow workers. Workers who chose to vote were forced to walk down a gauntlet of thugs lining a long hallway and then at the end of the hall had to enter the voting room where a thug on each arm escorted the worker to one of three voting tables.

Music blasted loud enough in the voting room that the workers and independent union representatives could not hear what was happening at the other tables that were also separated by temporary walls. Company managers and CMT and CROC representatives were at each table to witness each worker's verbal declaration of her vote.

With less than an hour until the union election would begin no one was allowed to enter or leave the plant where the vote was to be taken. The company did not allow second or third shift workers to return home the night before. The Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras was instrumental in bringing the international contingent to observe and has worked very close with the organizers throughout the independent union drive.

CJM Executive Director Martha Ojeda, herself a former maquiladora worker, said, "With this shockingly undemocratic election, the new Fox administration has made it crystal clear that it has no intention of re-

forming Mexico's corrupt system of government and company-dominated unions. Despite Fox's promise to 'put a human face on the global economy,' we now know he will oppose any attempts by maquiladora workers to improve their sub-poverty wages and deadly working conditions. In fact, this represents a step backward from promises made to NAFTA partners by the previous government to move toward secret ballot union elections. Moreover, this election demonstrates the repression and fraud that multinational corporations are willing to use, that the CROC is now replacing the declining CTM, and that in future attempts to organize their own unions the workers are going to be fighting with gangsters."

One man approached the gates asking to speak with his wife because his son was sick and she never came home from work the day before. Then a worker who was outwardly friendly toward the independent union members was refused entry into the plant and therefore unable to vote.

Hundreds of workers were held captive while the company threw a party with food, alcohol and music that night. By the end of the day the company won the vote as the workers inside the plant voted in favor of the company union.

Independent union representative and lawyer complaints of irregularities and requests for confirmation of the validity of several votes were ignored. Some voters used names that were not on the valid voter lists. No independent union representatives were able to confirm if all second and third shift workers were allowed to vote.

The independent union expected to have one final contact with workers before they would enter the factory and be subjected to intimidation similar to what had been perpetrated by company goons for the past year and more so the last two weeks. Leaflets with the union name were to be disbursed so workers would be able to read the union name if intimidated at the voting table. Instead the company was able to orchestrate the CTM union withdrawing from the election, have the workers receive a leaflet with the CROC union name and win.

On Thursday, the day before the union election, organizers and supporters looked on as thugs unloaded what appeared to be automatic weapons from a car at the plant gate and watched with terror as the weapons were openly carried into the plant. National Public Radio reported that the company had conceded to union demands for firearms to be removed from the plant.

Thirty-nine election observers from Mexico, the U.S. and Canada including union, human rights and clergy representatives, stood outside the plant gate all day, prevented from entering the plant to actually witness the vote. Local and international press asked for admittance into the plant but were kept outside as well.

While the voting was going on, a car came out of the plant, driven by two of the CROC thugs. Workers recognized the car and drivers, one of whom had threatened union organizers during the week. The car hit one of the fired workers and was stopped. People outside the gate refused to let it go and insisted on searching the trunk. In it they found banners and flyers of the independent union that had been torn down from public places and confiscated from employees. Although nominally the election was between unions, again and again observers and independent unionists declared that it was really between a workers' union and the company.

Protests may be emailed to Duro Bag at info@durobag.com. Hallmark (which buys 15% of Duro Rio Bravo's gift bags) can be reached at info@hallmark.com or fax: (816) 274-7555. Mexican President Vicente Fox Quesada can be emailed at: precisa@presidencia.gob.mx